GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:606
ANSWERED ON:08.05.2002
INDIA`S IMAGE
SHANKAR PRASAD JAISWAL;T. GOVINDAN

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) Whether Government`s attention has been drawn to the news-item appearing in the `Hindustan Times` dated April 8, 2002, captioned, `Nation`s image takes a beating`;

(b) if so, the steps taken since to improve the nation`s image after the Gujarat riots; and

(c) the success achieved in the matter so far?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH)

(a), (b) and (c) : A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN PARTS (a) to (c) OF ANSWER TO LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 606 TO BE ANSWERED ON 08.05.2002

1. Government has seen the news-item in the `Hindustan Times` dated April 8, 2002.

2. Proactive measures have been taken by the Ministry of External Affairs and its Missions abroad to explain the facts relating to the violence in Gujarat, also to emphasize India`s resilience in dealing with such aberrations and commitment to a secular, democratic polity where the institutions of State have the ability to address and control all such wrongs. It has also been underscored that as in any vigorous democracy, our institutions and public opinion are involved in an open and free debate about events in Gujarat and self-corrective democratic processes are at work. Concerns regarding violence, loss of life and property and the requirement for urgent humanitarian relief have been addressed vigorously and effectively in the Indian media, public opinion and civil society, by Government, by Parliament and by NHRC alongwith various other bodies like Minorities Commission, National Commission for Women etc.

3. Government`s representatives abroad have, apart from substantive interaction with the local Foreign Offices, also given interviews to newspapers and television channels to clarify India`s position. Associations of Non Resident Indians have also been provided detailed briefing on the events. The endeavour has been to emphasize India`s composite culture, its secular traditions, and its capacity and will to deal with aberrations of this nature.

Efforts made by the Government in this regard have been positively noted and India`s determination to abide by its democratic and secular traditions widely acknowledged and recognised.